

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7525

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: LETTER TO AMBASSADOR MARTIN FROM OPPOSITION FIGURE TON
THAT THIEN

1. PROFESSOR TON THAT THIEN, PROMINENT OPPOSITION FIGURE AND RE-
PORTED BIG MINH ASSOCIATE SENT THE
QUOTED BELOW TO AMBASSADOR MARTIN. HE CHARGES IN THE
LETTER THAT THE GVN HAS UNJUSTLY DENIED HIM AN EXIT VISA TO
ATTEND ACADEMIC SEMINARS ABROAD (HE DOES NOT SAY IN WHAT COUNTRY),
AND HE DEMANDS THE AMBASSADOR'S INTERVENTION. COPIES OF THE
LETTER WENT TO SENATORS MANSFIELD, FULBRIGHT, AND KENNEDY. WE
ARE REPLYING WITH A NON-COMMITTAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

2. BEGIN QUOTE. I AM ADDRESSING THIS LETTER TO YOU BECAUSE
YOU REPRESENT A NATION WHICH IS A PRINCIPAL NOT TO SAY THE
PRINCIPAL PARTY TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 27 1973 AND
WHICH HAS TIME AND AGAIN PROCLAIMED THAT ITS PARTICIPATION IN
THE WAR IN VIETNAM WAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFENDING FREEDOM
AND DEMOCRACY.

3. QUOTE. UNDER ARTICLE II OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT, ALL
CITIZENS OF VIETNAM ARE FREE TO TRAVEL AND TO ATTEND TO THEIR
PROFESSIONAL BUSINESSES PEACEFULLY. BUT THIS RIGHT HAS BEEN
DENIED TO ME, AND I AM WRITING TO RECORD MY PROTEST AGAINST
SUCH DENIAL.

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4. QUOTE. THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU HAS DENIED ME AN EXIT VISA TO ATTEND ACADEMIC SEMINARS ABROAD. MY APPLICATION DATED JULY 25 1973 AFTER LYING UNATTENDED TO FOR THREE WEEKS, WAS FORWARDED BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR TO THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE ON AUGUST 25 AND THE LATTER DID NOT EVEN HAVE THE COURTESY OF ADVISING ME OF ITS DECISION SO THAT COULD PLAN THE USE OF MY TIME. KEEPING SILENT IS A WAY OF SAYING NO, AND SINCE I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ON MY WAY ON SEPTEMBER 2 THE SILENCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE IS IN FACT A NEGATIVE ANSWER. IF A PROFESSOR AND FORMER MINISTER IS TREATED THIS WAY, HOW COULD A SIMPLE PEASANT EVER HOPE TO SEE HIS RIGHTS RESPECTED OR TO BE TREATED DECENTLY.

5. QUOTE. THE RIGHT TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE IS A SACRED RIGHT AND IT IS ALL THE MORE SO IN THE CASE OF AN UNDERDEVELOPED NATION LIKE VIETNAM. TO BLOCK THIS SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE IS TO PRACTICE A POLICY OF OBSCURANTISM, AND I AM SURE THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SUPPORT SUCH A POLICY AS TO MY KNOWLEDGE, IT IS AGAINST THE TRADITIONS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

6. QUOTE. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IS NOT ONLY THE PRINCIPAL PARTY TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT. IT WAS THE SOLE NEGOTIATOR OF THAT AGREEMENT ON THE NON COMMUNIST SIDE. IT THEREFORE HAS A MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY IN SEEING THAT THE AGREEMENT IS CARRIED OUT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE ITS CREDIBILITY IN VIETNAMESE EYES.

7. QUOTE. FURTHERMORE AS A SUPPLIER OF ARMS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU EXCLUSIVELY IT SHOULD SEE TO IT THAT THESE ARMS ARE NOT USED TO SUPPRESS THE RIGHTS OF HONEST AND PEACEFUL NON COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE. I AM SURE THAT THIS WAS THE INTENT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WHEN THEY PAID TAXES TO PROCURE THESE ARMS.

8. QUOTE. I BRING UP THIS LATTER POINT BECAUSE AS A TEACHER OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, I ALWAYS FOUND IT HARD TO ANSWER THE QUESTION SO OFTEN RAISED BY MY STUDENT: 'WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE UNITED STATES IN VIETNAM? IS IT TRUE THAT THE UNITED STATES ARE HERE TO DEFEND FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY? IF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT IS SO, WHY HAS IT SUPPLIED THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT THIEU WITH THE MEANS TO SUPPRESS THE FREEDOMS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE? AS AN HONEST TEACHER AND AN HONEST MAN, I MUST NOT LIE TO MY STUDENTS AND GIVE THEM EXPLANATIONS WHICH ARE BLATANTLY CONTRARY TO THE FACTS. SO PLEASE MR. AMBASSADOR HELP ME BY PUTTING THE FACTS ON MY SIDE WHEN I SAY TO MY STUDENTS THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE UNITED STATES IN VIETNAM IS NOT TO HELP ANYONE SUPPRESS THE FREEDOMS OF THE

VIETNAMESE PEOPLE.

9. QUOTE. PLEASE ACCEPT THE EXPRESSION OF MY HIGH CON-
SIDERATION. END QUOTE.
APPLING

NOTE BY OC/T: LINE 2 OF PARA 1 OF SAIGON 17099 AS RECEIVED.
VERIFICATION UPON REQUEST.

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